

THE
BEST REFUGE
FOR THE
MOST OPPRESSED,

IN

A Sermon Preached to the Honourable House of Commons at their solemn FAST, March 30. 1642.

By Simeon. *Assh* Minister in London.

Published by Order of that House.

ESA. 26.1.

In that day shall this Song be sung in the Land of Judah, We have a strong City, Salvation Will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Edward Brewster and Iohn Burroughs,
'and are to be sold at the Bible on Fleet-
Bridge and the golden Dragon neare the
Inner-Temple-Gate, 1642.

BEST REFUGE

MOST OFFERED

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TO THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE
of COMMONS now assembled
in PARLIAMENT.



He severall Creatures, according to their severall instincts, seeke the preservation of themselves. Nature hath taught those which are void of reason, to make use of such shelters as common providence hath provided. The Conies (saith Solomon) are but a feeble folke, yet make they their houses in the rock. And the Psalmist telleth us, that the high hills are a refuge for the wild Goats.

Pro. 30.
26.

Pf. 104.
18.

Men in like manner acted by different principles betake themselves to different waies of defence. The rich mans wealth is his strong City, and as an high Tower in his conceit. Some shroud themselves under the authority of great ones, as Birds build in the branches, and Beasts seek shadow under the boughs of high and spreading Trees.

Pro. 18.
11.

Dan. 4.
10, 11.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Judg. 9.
50, 51. *When Abimelech encamping against Thebez had taken it, all the men and women fled into the strong Tower that was within the City.*

Pro. 18.
10. *But the regenerate being raised by the spirit of grace above the world, they are carried beyond all things, on this side God, for the securing of their comforts and safeguarding of their persons. The name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. Vnto this refuge (which is above all others, and better then all others) my Text and my Sermon directeth Gods oppressed people. This Text was judged seasonable when I preached upon it, for then the times began to be lowering: the improvement of this Doctrine, is now become more necessary, because our dangers are increased, and some suspect that England is threatened with a shewre of blood.*

Nah. 3.
12. *The words of the Prophet Nahum to Nineveh are notable. All thy strong holds shall bee like Fig-trees, with the first ripe Figs if they be shaken they shall even fall. And therefore our souls should say, some trust in Chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. When God had delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, he still resolves to have steady referen-*

Pf. 60.
11.

Pf. 18. tit

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ces unto his Majesty for future defence. The Lord v. 2, 3.
is my Rock and my Fortresse and my Deliverer,
my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my
Buckler and the horne of my Salvation, and my
high Tower, I will call upon the Lord. How
much more doth it now concerne us (being surroun-
ded with dangers) to make hast to Heaven for deli-
verance. For our helpe is in the name of the Ps. 124.
Lord who made Heaven and earth. 8.

By speedy Repentance we run to God, and if we re- Job 22.
turn unto the Almighty, he will be our Defence. 23, 25.

By a firme fiduciall adherence unto the word of pro-
mise we make our abode with his highnesse. He that
dwellleth in the secret place of the most High, Ps. 91. 1.
shall lodge under the shadow of the Almighty. 2, 4.
I will say of the Lord he is my Refuge and my
Fortresse, my God in him will I trust, hee shall
cover thee with his feathers, and under his wing
shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy Shield and
Buckler. The Magazine and Militia of the world
is in this Castle with the Lord of Hosts, and it is ex-
ercised by the prayers of his people. Prayers draw
forth the Armies of the living God. I can pray to my Mat. 26.
Father (saith Christ) and he shall presently give 53.
me more then twelve legions of Angels. 1. The
Hosts sent from Heaven upon prayer are Angels,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

which excell in strength. For one of them in one night killed a hundred fourescore and five thousand valiant men. 2. No lesse then twelve legions are set on worke by meanes of prayer : A legion is judged to be six thousand Foot and seven hundred Horse, according to which computation this Army of Angels raised by prayer is exceeding great. 3. This great Army is by prayer dispatch'd from Heaven in an instant, and he shall presently give me, &c.

Luther called his groanes and prayers Guns and instruments of Warre. Christians in the Army of Marcus Aurelius by prayer prevailed with God both to give raine to refresh the Army and to cast downe baile with thunderbolts upon the enemy, whereupon they were honoured with that title, Legio Fulminatrix. David seemeth to suggest some such consequences of his prayers in times of danger : In my distresse I called on the Lord, &c. then the Earth shooke and trembled, the Foundations also of the Hills moved and were shaken : There went up a smoake out of his nostrils and fire out of his mouth devoured. The Lord also thundered in the Heavens and the highest gave his voyce, haile-stones and coales of fire, yea he sent out his arrows and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. Preces & lachry-

Pl. 18.^c,
7, 8.

13.
14.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

lachrymæ sunt arma Ecclesiæ, and with such weapons (most Noble Senators) I am perswaded you be as well guarded, as ever any Assembly in the world. The hearts of many thousands doe daily put you into the armes of omnipotency, and into the bosome of the Lord of Hosts. This one thought (which is much inferiour unto many other encouragements) might be sufficient to beare up your spirits above all difficulties, which can encounter you in attending upon the welfare of this Church and Common-wealth. Your selves have tasted the first fruits of Fasting and Prayer in many-fold experiences: Be confident there is a full Harvest behind, which will abundantly recompence all your great labours and adventures for God and his people.

Many of my Reverend Brethren, have presented you with their rich gifts, with which they served you at your monthly Fasts: And now I humbly tender my two Mites. Your acceptance is my satisfaction, and if this my poore labour of much love and duty, shall contribute any whit unto the publicke good (at which I levelled in it) it will be no small addition to my joyes:

The Lord direct your Counsels by his wisdom, protect your Persons by his Power, and
prof-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

prosper all your worthy endeavours by his blessing, according to the riches of his glorious grace in IESVS CHRIST, in whom I
am

Your Servant in all faithfulness,
but in much weakness

SIMEON ASH.



A
SERMON PREACHED
At the late Fast before the *Commons*
House of PARLIAMENT.

PSAL. 9. 9.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.



His *Psalm* is almost altogether Eucharisticall, for it containing twenty verses, onely three of them are spent in prayer, v. 13, 19, 20. the other 17. are bestowed in thanksgiving.

And certainly there is much Christianity, much Christian policy in weaving and working praises and prayers into each other. For as God is highly honoured by prayer, *Psalm* 116. 13, 14. *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me (saith David) his answer followes, I will call upon the Name of the Lord.*

B

So

So Prayer proves the more prevalent, being accompanied with prayſes; becauſe when glory is returned unto God for favours formerly afforded, his Maieſties great deſigne is ſerved and his expectation ſatiſfied. *I will deliver and thou ſhalt glorifie me*, whereupon the thankfull Petitioner may moſt hopefully expect theſpeeding of his great petitions at the throne of grace.

Pl. 50. 15.

Let us learne this pious policy, this religious Rhetorick in our addreſſes unto God, (*viz.*) to preface, to put on our ſuites of greateſt concernment with thankſgivings to the Lord, for the great things already done amongſt us, by his apparant and remarkable providences.

The Occaſion of the praifes in this *Pſalme* preſented (as it is generally conceived) was ſome glorious generall deliverance from ſome very deepe and deſperate danger. And ſome Interpreters conjecture, that the killing of *Goliath* and the overthrow of the *Philiftines*, as a conſequence of that victory, occaſioned this part of holy Scripture.

One ground of this conjecture, is, from theſe words in the title ſet before the *Pſalme*, *Victori ſuper Muſh-Labben*, or *ſuper morte Labben*, To the chiefe Muſiti-an upon *Muſh-Labben*. For *Muſh* in Hebrew ſignifies death, and *Labben* they take to be the name of that Champion, that Giant, that Monster of men, who deſied the hoſt of the living God.

From hence note by the way two things,

1. That the enemies of Gods *Iſrael* are put to flight by the downfall of their Champions. An Antichriſtian party may better be plucked downe, if the heads of that faction be removed.

2. That

2. That the death and downfall of *Israels* enemies draweth forth praises from the righteous.

In this *Psalme*, *David* that sweet Singer of *Israel*, praiseth God, both in regard of the beautifull, usefull excellencies, which he espied in him, and also in respect of the renowned Acts which had beene wrought by him.

It may be some heere present, because of this which I have spoken, begin to question my discretion in the choyce of this Text this day. For how unreasonable (may it be objected) is a subject of Thanksgiving, for the service of heart humbling. Give me leave therefore (Right Honourable) before I proceed to prevent this prejudice.

Whereas the three chiefe services of this day are,

1. Heart humbling.
2. Humble hopefull praying.
3. Conscientious Covenant renewing. All these are much promoted by such a subject.

For the first, what meditations more melting to thaw downe the icy, the frozen spirits then Gods mercies, what considerations can more kindly, more thoroughly breake the sinners heart then the excellencies and kindnesse of that God who hath beene by sinne dishonoured.

For the 2^d. what arguments will more forcibly draw forth the soul in holy suites before the Lord, then his abilities to bestead us in all concernments, and our experiences of his readinesse to lay forth himselfe for our comfort in former times.

For the 3^d. How shall a Christian be sooner conquered, to give up selfe unto the most High by solemne Covenant, then by the apprehension of the full satisfi-

factions to bee enjoyed, in enjoying his Majestic.

My Text contains one intire Proposition. *The Lord will be a Refuge for the oppressed in times of trouble.*

Wherein 1. The Subject. 2. The Predicate are considerable.

The Subject hath in it much sownesse, for it suggesteth unto us, Gods owne people in a sad, in a suffering condition, *Oppressed and in trouble.*

The Predicate comprizeth more sweetnesse, for it propoundeth Almighty God as the happiest harbour for his poore people to put into in stormy weather, or rather (that I may hold to the Metaphor in my Text) it directeth the oppressed soule unto the safest refuge to run into in daies of ruinating dangers. *The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of Trouble.*

My Text holdeth forth two Truths, open and apparant unto every eye.

1. *That trouble and oppression may be the condition of Gods owne peculiar people.*

2. *That the Lord will be a refuge unto his oppressed people in times of trouble.*

My purpose is to prosecute both these points at this time, being both profitable and seasonable, I shall say the lesse of the former, because onely implied; but I will be larger in the latter, because openly expressed and chiefly intended. The first truth which craves

Doct. 1. your attention is this; *That oppression and trouble may be in this world the portion of Gods children.*

In the handling hereof, I shall, 1. Interpret the words. 2. Confirm the Doctrine. 3. Endeavour to put all into practise by application.

There

There are 2. words to be opened.

First, *Oppressed*. The original word here used I find translated in holy writ. 1. Broken down. *Then hast thou sore broken (or broken us downe) in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* Pl. 44. 19.

2. Sore broken. *I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietnesse of my heart.* Pl. 38. 8.

And the fulnesse of its signification, may be fetched from the root, whence it is derived, which is variously rendred in sacred Scripture.

1. To crush.

His children are farre from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them. Job 5. 4.

2. To crush under feet.

To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the Earth. Lam. 3. 34.

3. To smite downe unto the ground.

The enemy hath persecuted my soule, he hath smitten my life downe to the ground. Pl. 143. 3.

4. To breake into peeces.

They breake in peeces thy people o Lord. Pl. 94. 5.

All these are applyable, to expresse the sad condition of Gods servants in regard of oppression; they may bee crushed by intollerable loades laid upon them, they may be throwne into the dust by the hand of violence, they may be sore broken, broken into peeces in regard of all their outward comforts, by the prevailing power of cruell enemies.

The 2^d. word to be interpreted is *Trouble*, which I finde translated,

1. Affliction.

In all their affliction, he was afflicted. Ps. 63. 9.

2. Adversity.

As the Lord liveth who hath redeemed my soule from all adversity. 2 Sam. 4. 9.

3. Tribulation.

Iu. 10. 14. *Go and cry unto the gods whom you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.*

4. Distresse.

Pl. 18. 6. *In my distresse I called upon the Lord.*

5. Anguish.

Gen. 42. 21. *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soule, &c.*

6. The pangs of a woman intravell.

Esa. 21. 3. *There are my loynes filled with paine, pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth.*

And it is derived of a root which signifieth to besiege, and is so rendred in holy writ.

Ier. 32. 2. *The King of Babylons Army besieged Ierusalem.*

All these words, tell us, what fore troubles may overtake and take hold on the people of God. Many and heavy may be the the afflictions of the godly. They may be pursued, overtaken, trampled upon, grievously pained, filled with inward anguish, and besieged on every side with tribulation and distresse.

Confirmation

The prooffe of the point followes, 1. By Scriptures;
2. By Reason.

By Scripture.

Pl. 44. 24. *First more generally. Take notice of the complaint of Gods Church. Wherefore hidest thou thy face and forgettest our affliction and our oppression. For our soule is bowed downe to the dust, our belly cleaveth unto the earth. And the Psalmist reporteth thus much.*
Pl. 107. 39. *They are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow.*

Secondly and more particularly. The servants of God may be troubled and oppressed.

1. In

1. In their credit by false and injurious accusations, *Dauids adversaries charged him with murtherous and traitorous designs, Because of the voyce of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked for they cast iniquity upon me. False witnesses (or witnesses of wrong) did rise up, they layed to my charge, things that I knew not.* Pl. 55. 3.
Pl. 35. 11.

2. In their outward estates and persons, as by heavy impositions and fore exactions, so by the oppressing sword, and bloody warre.

The Prophet *Amos* cryed out in his times, of them *who oppresse the poore, and crush the needy. Who sold the righteous for silver, and the poore for a payre of shoes. Who layed themselves downe upon cloathes layed to pledge.* Am. 4. 1.
Cha. 2. 6. 8
And the Prophet *Jeremiah* often speaks of the oppressing Sword reaching Gods *Israel*. *Arise and let us goe againe to our owne people, and to the Land of our Nativity from the oppressing Sword : For feare of the oppressing Sword they shall turne every one to his People.* Ier. 46. 16.
Ier. 50. 16.

3. In their soules by violent persecutions, driving them from the house and worship of God. *David* he figheth forth this sad complaint when by the malice of blood-thirsting *Saul*, he was driven into the wilderness when faine hee would have convers'd with God in his holy place. *Why goe I mourning* Pl. 42. 9.
2, 4 *(saith he) because of the oppression of the enemy.*

The fore-going verses tell us that at this time *David* was banished from the publick Ordinances of God formerly enjoyed. And in the following Psalm he maketh the like complaint upon the selfe same ground.

Why goe I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy, Pl. 42. 3.

enemy: to send out thy light and thy truth, let them bring mee unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacles.

Our owne times have given in too many instances of grievous oppressions of all these kindes, which have pinched the people of God, and therefore I shall not need by way of prooffe to say any more.

The Grounds whence it is that the condition of Gods dearest servants may be thus calamitous are two.

Reas. 1.

Pl. 106. 40.

41.

42.

From God sharply correcting them for their evils. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his People, And he gave them into the hand of the Heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

Esa. 42. 21.

ver. 24.

25.

That passage in the Prophecy of *Esaiah*, I may not passe over in silence, because it is so pregnant to the point in hand. This is a People robbed and spoyled, they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses, they are for a prey, and none delivereth, for a spoyle and none saith Restore. Who gave Jacob for a spoyle, and Israel to the Robbers, did not the Lord against whom we have sinned? for they would not walke in his wayes, neither were they obedient to his Law: Therefore he poured upon him the fury of his anger and the strength of battle, and is bath set him on fire round about.

Reas. 2.

Pl. 44. 22.

2. From malevolent mischievous men maligning them for their goodnesse. For thy sake are we killed all the day long, and we are accounted as sheepe for the slaughter. Why must *Shadrach*, *Mesbakh* and *Abednego* be cast into the fiery furnace? because they would not idolatrously bow to the Image that was set

set

set up. Why must *Daniel* be throwne into the Lyons Den? because hee would not draw backe from doing homage and devotion in wayes of holy prayer unto his God.

The Application of the Point followeth, and it may sundry wayes be seasonably serviceable to our soules.

Hence we may guesse at the hainousnesse of sinne, *Use 1.* for which we come to be humbled this day at the foot of the Lord.

Should we see a wise, patient and a loving father cast his child to the ground, bruise his flesh and break his bones by blowes, we would be confident the offence was foule; such a Father is God unto his People, and yet thus he sometimes deales with them, as the Scriptures already cited doe evidently and abundantly witness. Herein consider the carriage of divine Providence towards *Iob*, though he was the *Phoenix* of the world for Piety, none like him upon Earth, a man perfect and upright, who feared God and eschewed evill; yet was he oppressed in his estate, broken in his Posterity, blemish'd in his credit, bruised in his body, and wounded in his spirit. And yet marke in this his deplorable condition what was spoken for his humbling. *Know this that God exacteth of thee lesse then thine iniquity deserveth.*

Iob 11. 6.

This meditation may be of singular and seasonable use to helpe forward penitentiall heart-ake for our sins this day. Had we spoken, or done somewhat inconsiderately for which the high Court of Parliament might justly by imprisonment confine our Persons, by fines ruinate our fortunes, by setting us upon the Pillory expose us to reproach and derision, or by painfull

racking, torment our bodies, how would blushing cover our faces and our knee bones knocke one against another: Now my Beloved our sinnes, personall sins, Family sinnes, City sinnes, Country sinnes, Kingdome sinnes, Pride, Passion, Prodigality, Hypocrisy, Oaths, Blasphemy, polluting Gods Ordinanees, Sacriligious lavishing our holy time, doe expose us to much more misery then I can mention, unto more heayvy oppressions then my language can reach unto: and shall we not be deeply humbled before divine Majesty from whom such sad things have many thousand wailes, and more then many thousand times beene deserved.

Use 2.

2. This Doctrine somewhat discovereth the exceeding, exceeding sad condition of the wicked, for doubtlesse their case is much more uncomfortable then the worst estate that Gods owne People can possibly be cast into: Holy Scripture doth hold forth this inference, *Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the Earth, how much more the wicked and the Sinner?*

Prov. 11.
31.

1 Pet. 4. 17

The Apostle Peter speaking of the fiery tryall, which the faithfull in those times were put upon, he argueth in this manner. *The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them who obey not the Gospel of God.* And is there not abundant reason to make good this conclusion.

Pl. 11. 6.

1. If God a friend, a Father afflict thus severely, what will he doe, when as an enemy he commeth armed with fury. *Vpon the wicked he shall raine snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible (or burning) tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.*

2. If the Lord having his justice satisfied doth deale thus

thus roughly with his owne People endeavouring
 their good, what will he doe (thinke you) when as
 an angry Judge he commeth in extreme rigour, to take
 vengeance, and to make men miserable. *If I whet my
 glittering Sword, and my hand take hold on judgement,*
 I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward
 them that hate mee, I will make mine arrowes drunke
 with blood, and my Sword shall devoure flesh, and that with
 the blood of the slaine and of the Captives, from the be-
 ginning of revenges upon the enemy. You whose con-
 sciences tell you, you have sleighted Gods governe-
 ment, obscured his excellencies, dishonoured his
 name, I beseech you be perswaded from this which
 hath beene spoken to repent, and to amend this day.
 Remember that God is angry with the wicked every
 day, if he turne not he will whet his Sword, he hath
 bent his Bow and made it ready, he hath prepared for
 him instruments of death, he ordaineth his Arrowes a-
 gainst the Persecutours.

Deut. 32.
 ver. 41, 42.

Ps. 7. 11,
 12, 13.

I conclude this Use with the Caveat given by the
 Psalmist, Now consider this yee that forget GOD,
 lest I teare you in peeces, and there bee none to de-
 liver.

Ps. 50. 22.

This meditation may be of speciall use to stanch
 murmuring, and to strengthen Patience under our
 present Pressures. The authour of the Epistle to the
 Hebrewes maketh this improvement of this Doctrine.
 Wherfore seeing we also are compassed about with so great
 a cloud of Witnesses, let us runne with patience unto the
 race that is set before us. The witnesses to whom hee
 hath reference were with their sore sufferings pointed
 at in the preceding Chapter.

Use 3.

Heb. 12. 1.

And the argument will come home with strength
 upon

upon our hearts, if we take notice of a double diffinitude or difference between our selves, and those sufferers in the Primitive times.

1. Our Pressures are lighter.

2. Their Graces were higher.

First, Their grievances were heavier then any that we through Gods long-sufferance as yet lye under :

Heb. 11.

ver. 36, 37

For they had tryall of cruell mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment, they were stoned, they were sawne asunder, slaine with the sword, they wandred about in Sheeps-skins, Goate-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

ver. 38.

Secondly, Their worth was greater, then our modesty will suffer us to say we have yet attained : Of whom (saith the Apostle) *the world was not worthy.* Those who were beyond the worlds worth, yet were thus inhumanely, thus barbarously dealt with. Let this be thought upon with all seriousness; for though Christian Patience be alwayes needfull and commendable, yet most beautifull and seasonable when humiliation is professed and expressed before the Lord, as we doe this day. *The humbled hearts will accept the punishment of their iniquity.*

Lev. 16. 41

Use 4.

The thought of the many distressing troubles which Gods people are exposed unto in this world, may serve to abate in our hearts the immoderate desire of long life on Earth.

Mistake me not, for I know that long life is a desirable Blessing.

Yet should we all labour to sit loose, both in regard of the meanes of bodily livelihood, and life it selfe.

And doubtlesse our God endeavours to weane us from

from the world, by applying wormewood (as it were) to the full Breasts of our sweetest sublunary contentments.

The Apostle *Paul*, by his prison and bonds was brought to this bent, to be willing, at a little warning, to come away from all enjoyments under the Sunne.

I desire to be dissolved.

Phil. 1. 23.

Here I thinke it needfull to give in a double Caution, that we may escape a double Rocke, upon which many dash and bruisse themselves in desiring death.

1. Doe not desire to dye in passion and discontent.

Herein the Prophet *Ionah* missed it very much, when he conjectured that his credit might be somewhat eclipsed, and himselfe reputed a false Prophet, because *Nineveh* was not destroyed. And when the heat of the Sunne annoyed his Body, *He wished in himselfe to die,* Ion 4. 8.
and said, it is better for me to die then to live.

2. Be not weary of life, through discouragement of spirit, because of difficulties and dangers encountering you in doing duty.

In this kind *Elijah* was too blame.

When *Iezabell* resolved to take away his life, *he* 1 Kin. 19.
sate downe under a Juniper tree, and requested for him- selfe 2. 4. *(or for his life) that hee might die, &c.*

(Right honourable) The Lord I believe hath given you more masculine, more Heroick spirits, then to offend in these kinds: Therefore instead of enlarging the Cautions, I will give in two Directions, to guide your practice of the use under hand, in both which, you have the blessed Apostle *Paul* for a glorious patterne.

1. Let nothing so much as love to Jesus Christ carry your hearts out of the world.

Phil. 1. 23.

I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is farre better.

And there is good reason for it, in reference to the Point now prosecuting, because perfect liberty from the worst oppressours, and heaviest oppressions is one-ly to be enjoyed in the bosome of our blessed Saviour.

2. When your longings after rest with Christ are boyled up, are rayed to the greatest height, even then in love to Christ, be content for a time to be without him in Heaven, that you may still be serviceable to him in his cause, and the comforts of his people here on Earth.

Phil. 1. 24,
25, 26.

Neverthelesse to abide in the flesh is more needfull for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of Faith. That your rejoycing may be more abundant in Iesus Christ for me, by my coming to you againe.

Now here (Right Honourable) give me leave to speake one word to you, and beare with it, though you account it a digression. If the good Apostle could contentedly keepe from Heaven for a time, yea from Christ the Heaven of Heaven, that he might doe his servants some more service in the world. Then be you willing to be with-held from many accommodations in your owne countries, yea in a sort to be estranged from Wives, Children, Neighbours, delightfull enjoyments, that you may serve both Church and Common-wealth in *England*, that you may honour Iesus Christ in the happy worke of Re-
forma-

formation now in your hands, and in the hearts of all Gods people through the Kingdome.

It admonisheth us all to take up our thoughts sometimes with tart troubles and heavy oppressions. Use 5.

Abundant cause we have thus to doe, and we shall confesse thus much, if we consider,

1. How Heaven (the God of Heaven I meane) is incensed against us, by our continued and multiplied abominations; we still heare profane, bloody Oaths, Curses, Blasphemies ringing in our eares; wee still see brutish drunkenness reeling and spewing in our streets; The Lords-day is commonly profaned before our eyes; yea though this City be famous for Religion, yet the streets are filled with vain walkings and the fields with profane sportings, even during the time of publick worship, *And shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord?* Jer. 9.9.

2. How hell and earth are combined against us, because we endeavour Reformation. The Devill roares, because his Kingdom is battered. Papists and Atheists rage, because Popery and profaneness is opposed.

And certainly if that Prince of the ayre, who also worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience can worke any mischiefs, raise any stormes, cause any confusions, we shall now be sure to be oppressed with them. Rev 12.13 Lu. 9.41.

3. How *Ireland* is oppressed and wasted, because it professeth the Protestant Religion. Religion, Religion is the root of the quarrell, of the warres raised there. And doubtlesse the Papists, those Lyons, those Beasts of prey are of the same spirit, as greedy after Protestant blood in *England*, as in *Ireland*. They are birds of a feather, though they roost in divers nests. But

But you will aske me, what is your meaning? wherefore would you have us mind tribulation & oppression.

I answer, This I humbly request for a double reason. 1. That such a condition may be prevented. 2. that we may be prepared for what in that kinde must be endured.

First, That we may be moved to seeke the prevention of such troubles and oppressions as are ready (for ought we know) to presse, to rush in upon us suddenly.

1. By an humble submission unto the good pleasure of our God, in an open ingenious acknowledgement of our provocations.

Malefactors who refuse stubbornly to take a faire legall tryall, according to the Lawes of our Kingdome, must be pressed to death. This course God held with *David*, he did set him, as it were, upon the racke, where he roared till he resolved to confesse. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* The Lord make us wise for our owne ease and comfort in this regard. Let us particularly without partiality acknowledge our offences against our God, and submit our selves. And the children of *Israel* said unto the Lord, *We have sinned, doe thou unto us whatsoeuer seemeth good unto thee.*

FL 32.3.
Iudg. 10.
15.

2. By a speedy Reformation. Acknowledgement without amendment will be no prevention of wrath, but rather a further provocation. Whereas repentance may make way for our escape, when judgement is at the doore: *And they put away the strange gods from among them, and Gods soule was grieved for the misery of Israel. They turned from their evill way, and God repented of the evill that he had said he would doe.* Whereas if this be not done, the Lord will lay

Iu. 10. 18.
Ion 3. 10.

lay on more weight, he will punish seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more, and seven times more. The passages in *Leuiticus* speake fully Gods purpose in this particular against the impenitent.

Levit. 26.

18, 21, 24,

28.

I beseech you, I beseech you (Right Honourable and Beloved) let not this my counsell be disregarded on this great day of our Humiliation before the Lord.

Secondly, That we may make provision, for the better bearing of the heaviest loades which man can or God will cast upon us.

We daily see in this City that Porters prepare themselves instruments, that they may carry their loades more easily, yea Carriers provide for their horse-backs Saddles and such like things, that those Creatures may beare their burdens without bruising, and shall we be carelesse?

But how shall this be done ?

1. By endeavouring to make and maintain all sound and whole within.

The sincere heart will well stand under great pressures because sound. Being pressed above measure, the Apostles did joyfully beare the load by meanes of sincerity. Whereas if a bone be broken, or if the flesh be torne, yea if the skin be rub'd up, and the place abide raw, the laying on of the lightest load will cause paine and shrinking. 2Cor. 1. 9. 12.

In like manner will it be with our soules. As *Iob* while he maintained his gracious frame of heart, he was calme, though impoverished by the hand of oppression, though made childlesse by an heavy accident: but when by fretting he had galled his heart, how

D

doth

doth he lye downe, desire to dye and fly our shamefully under the load.

2. By seeking interest in God through Christ. *Come unto me* (saith our Saviour) *all ye that are heavy laden*. Whatsoever our loades are; whether inward, outward, heavier or lighter, we must make to Christ for ability to beare them, for he adds and abates weight at pleasure. Hee also augments and with-drawes strength according to his pleasure. *Without me* (saith Christ) *you can doe nothing*, neither without him can we endure any thing. And he onely can support the sinking soule under the most smarting troubles and heavy oppressions. Under his wing we shall be sure either of preservation or supportation. I will conclude this Use and this first Doctrine, with the counsell of the Psalmist. *Trust in him at all times, ye people, and poure out your hearts before him, God is a Refuge for us.* Selah.

Pl. 62. 8.

Now this lets in the second part of the Text to be prosecuted, which I called the Predicate in the Proposition, wherein God is by a Metaphor both made knowne and made over to his owne people, as their defence and deliverer.

Doff.

The Lord will be a refuge in times of trouble.

In the handling whereof. 1. The words used are to be interpreted. 2. The Truthes infolded in them are to be considered.

The Hebrew word here rendered Lord is *Iehovah*, a glorious title of our God, the only true God, used in holy Writ. 1. Both to advance his Name. 2. And also to support and solace his people.

Pl. 68. 4.

Exsoll him that rideth upon the Heavens by his Name Jah, and rejoyce before him.

The

The Originall word translated, *Refuge*, is derived מִשְׁכָּן of a root, which (as it is rendred in our translations) doth signifie.

1. To set on high.

שָׂבַח

I will set him on high, because he hath knowne my name. Pf. 91. 14.

2. To exalt.

Behold God exalteth by his power.

Iob 36. 22

3. To exalt to safety.

To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourne may be exalted to safety. Iob 5. 11.

4. To defend.

The name of the God of Iacob defend thee.

Pf. 20. 11.

And I finde the word in the Text divers wayestranslated in the old Testament.

1. A strong Tower.

The name of the Lord is a strong Tower.

Psa 18. 10

2. A strong refuge.

Thou art my strong refuge.

Pf. 71. 7.

3. An high wall.

The rich mans wealth is his strong City, and is an high wall in his owne conceit.

Psa 18. 11

4. An high Tower.

The Lord is my rocke, &c. my buckler, the hurne of my Salvation, and my high Tower.

Pf 18. 2.

5. High Fortresse.

And the Fortresse of the high Fort of thy walls shall he bring downe, &c.

Esa. 25. 12.

6. Defence.

The Lord is my Defence, &c.

Pf. 94. 22.

Times. The word signifies the tempestivity, the season of time. The Septuagint renders it right, *Εὐκαιρία*. In good seasons. And thus we sometimes finde it expressed in sacred records.

Esa. 50. 4.

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speake a word in season, to him that is weary.

This Explication of the words being premised, this Predication, this part of the Proposition in the Text, holdeth forth 3. usefull truthes.

1. That the true God is *Iehovah*.

2. That God *Iehovah* is an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed people.

3. That the Lord *Iehovah* will be an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed people in the fittest seasons.

The limits of time set for the bounding of my Discourse will not allow me to speake unto these observations severally, and therefore I will only fasten upon the 2^d. being the principall: in the prosecution whereof I shall take in some things considerable in the two other, as the Lord shall direct.

Doct.

That God *Iehovah* is an incomparable Refuge to his oppressed People.

There are 2. Branches in the Doctrine.

1. That God is a Refuge.

2. That he is a Refuge incomparable.

In the handling hereof, 1. I will prove both the branches distinctly, 2. I will apply them joynly.

Refugium
καταφυγιον

The Lord will be a Refuge. The Greeke, the Latine and the English word, all hold forth the same thing. A place to fly backe unto.

The Metaphor seemes to be taken from the Camp, from warre, where it is the manner of Souldiers being beaten backe by an over-powring enemy, to retire unto some place of security and defence.

Now such a thing is God *Iehovah* unto his poore people,

people, overpowred and oppressed by the strength and violence of their enemies. He is a Castle, a Fortresse unto whom they may, unto whom they must retire, repaire for defence and safety.

For the generall proof of this first Branch, you may please to observe,

1. That God himself promiseth to be the refuge of his oppressed people.

For the oppression of the poore, for the sighing of the needy; now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him, that puffeth at him (or would ensnare him.) PL. 12.5.

2. That his oppressed servants claime and challenge thus much from his Majesty.

O Lord my strength and my fortresse, and my refuge in
the day of affliction. Ier. 16. 19.

Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with Songs of Deliverance. Selah. PL 32.7.

More particularly, it may be of good use for us to consider that the holy Scriptures doe give more full witness unto this truth, discovering unto us, That God is a refuge unto his Servants in regard of all kinds of annoyances which molest, all dangers which threaten them.

1. When clamours and out-cries are made after them. When they are wondred at, as Owles by the chirpings and chidings of other birds.

I am a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong
Refuge. Ps. 71. 2.

2. When infectious killing diseases are scattered
round about them *I will say of the Lord, he is my Refuge* Pf. 91. 2, 3
and my Fortresse, he shall deliver thee from the way some pe-
silence. &c. D 3 3. When

3. When bloody persecutors are stirred up against them.

Pl. 140 tit
& v. 4, 5. &c

When *David* by the violent pursuit of *Saul* was compelled to take Covert in a Cave, (hee saith) *I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soule, I cryed to thee o Lord, I said, thou art my refuge.*

Persecutions are sometimes compared to the scorching heat of the Sunne (*Math. 13. 6.*) and in that case God is a Refuge to shadow them.

And sometimes Persecutions are compared unto tempests or stormes (*Math. 7. 25, 27.*) in that case the Lord is a refuge to shelter them.

El. 25. 4

Thou hast beene a strength to the poore, a strength to the needy in his distresse, a refuge from the storme, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storme against the wall.

The 2^d. Branch of the Doctrine remains to be illustrated, *That God is a Refuge incomparable.* We may well call this Refuge, *Non-such.* For certainly there is not any other like unto it. He is a refuge and a refuge. A refuge *par' Excell* for excellency, as the fullnesse of the Originall word (explained) doth intimate.

And this may appeare in 7. particulars; three whereof are hinted in the word *Iehovah.*

Pl. 3, 18.

1. He is the highest, the All-commanding refuge. *Iehovah is most high over all the Earth.* In laying open the Originall word here rendred *Refuge*, you heard that it signifies, *An high wall, an high Tower, an high Fortresse.*

All high Towres are over-topped, and all Castles are commanded by this Refuge: The greatest Mount-
taines

taines are as Valleyes, as Mole-hills under the Lord Iehovah. No long Ladders can scale this high wall. No Arrowes of the strongest Archer; no Cannons of the mightiest Warriour can reach this high Towre. *Under the shadow of thy wings* (saith David) *will I make* ^{Ps. 57. 1, 2} *my refuge, untill these calamities be ever past.* And he addeth, *I will cry unto God most high. Be thou exalted o God above the Heavens.*

And the Prophet in his description of the Lord, ^{Esa. 40. 23,} *hath these expressions. The Inhabitants of the Earth* ^{23, 24.} *are as Grasshoppers. He bringeth the Princes to nothing, he maketh the Iudges of the Earth as vanity. He shall also blen upon them and they shall wither, and the whirlwinde shall take them away as stubble.*

2. He is an independent Refuge. The glorious title *Iab*, tels us, that our God is the God of beings, having his being of and from himselfe. What would you thinke (Beloved) of a Castle which could not be prejudiced, though all soyle should be digged up under it, though no waters should be suffered to flow unto it, though the passages for all provisions should be block'd up from it, though no Sun, no showers, no influences of Heaven should fall upon it.

Now such a refuge is our God Iehovah, for he can neither be damnified nor advantaged by any creature, any course, any combination whatsoever. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If* ^{Iob 35. 6,} *thou beest righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?* ^{7.}

3. He is a never-falling, a never-failing refuge. *In* ^{Esa. 26. 4.} *the Lord Iehovah is everlasting strength,* or as the Originall imports, *In the Lord Iehovah is the rocke of*
ages.

ages. No batteries can beat downe or weaken this Fortresse. The longest tract of time cannot demolish or ruinate this place of defence. Here the words of *Moses* the man of God are considerable. *Lord thou hast beene our dwelling place in all generations* (or as the Hebrew expresseth it) *in generation and generation*. What our God hath beene at any time to his distressed, endangered people, that he is and will be without alteration: For he is a strong, stable, ever-standing, unmoveable, immutable refuge to secure and safeguard them, who are his by peculiar Covenant.

4. He is the most capacious refuge. Gods immensity is roomy enough to receive all commers.

Iob 11. 7. *Canst thou by searching finde out God, Canst thou finde out the Almighty unto perfection, It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou doe, deeper then Hell what canst thou know. The measure thereof is longer then the Earth, and broader then the Sea.* Whereas Castles on Earth may be so crowded with companies, that the last commers are compelled to lye out of doores, as Bees hang out of the Hives mouth on heapes, through want of roome within. Although many millions more then ever will make unto the Almighty, should creepe into his bosome, yet no one could have occasion to complaine of being straightned in him. The Earth is not so vast to entertaine more Inhabitants, as our God, who is infinite and beyond all dimensions, to give shelter unto all those who flocke unto him in dayes of danger. *Doe not I fill Heaven and Earth,*

Ier. 23. 24. *saith the Lord.*

5. The passage to this Refuge is most safe and passable. Although our sins had blocked up our way

to

to God, and had made such a separation betwixt his Majesty and our poore soules, that our approaches to him might have beene perilous to all eternity : Yet now we have boldnesse (or liberty) to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Iesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vaile, that is to say, his flesh. In whom we have boldnes and ac-
 cesse with confidence, by the faith of him.

Heb. 10.

19, 20.

Eph. 3. 12.

The Lord our Saviour hath cast up such a caus-way (as it were) to Heaven, that we may well travell thither from all Coasts and corners of the Earth : we may safely saile through Christs bloud into the bosome of the Father. There are no boggs, no sands to sinke us, no Armies to cut us off in our approaches unto God for safety in stormy, troublesome times.

6. God is a refuge, ever and every where at hand.

Ps. 46. 1.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present helpe in trouble. Which is not only to be understood concerning the presence of his Essence, but of his speciall providence for their protection.

My Texttels us that he is a refuge for the oppressed in the seasons of trouble : God is not onely once, but alwaies seasonably present with his oppressed people, for markethe words, In the times, not at one time onely, or only many times, but in the times, in all times, all seasons of need. This consideration the Church
 of God took comfort in. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, or in the season of distresse.

Ier. 14. 8.

Whithersoever God by his Providence carrieth his people, there he vwill undoubtedly be a refuge to them, both for protection and provision. Thus saith the Lord, although I have cast them farre off among the Heathen; and although I have scattered them among the

Ezek. 11.

16.

Countries, yet will I be to them a little Sanctuary in the Countries where they shall come.

And the Apostle Paul reporting Gods dispensations towards old Israel, speaketh in this manner. They drank of that spirituall rocke that followed them (or went with them) and that Rocke was Christ.

Some glossing upon these words, say, that the waters which flowed from the Rocke did in a streame follow the Israelites in their journey for their refreshing. But this I take to be the true meaning of the Scripture. That in all their removals, according to their various necessities, the Lord was still at hand for their supply and safety.

Gen. 17. 1. 7. He is the best furnished refuge. The Lord is El-shaddai, God All-sufficient, perfectly able to satisfie all soules with all contentments to all eternity.

That which fully answereth unto all accommodations and comforts whatsoever, is to be found in God our Refuge. Here the Promise to the upright man, recorded by the Evangelicall Prophet is very considerable. He shall dwell on high (or in the heights) his place of Defence shall be the Munitions of Rockes, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure. Are not the words both fit and full to expresse and prove the particular under hand.

In this harbour the heart hath the goodliest prospects, the fullest provisions, the safest protections. Here the soule feedeth upon the sweetest Cordials, taketh the quietest, most refreshing rest, & the Bowers, the Walkes, the Gardens, the beds of Spices, the All-delights, which the spirit enjoys in the bosome of the Almighty.

Ps. 72. 17. Will you heare Davids judgement, Whom have Fin-
Heaven.

Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I desire beside thee, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

In the best situated Castles in the world, there is some defect in something needfull or desireable : either the ayre, or the water, or the soyle, or the neighbourhood doth annoy ; either food, or fewell, or friends, or somewhat else is scarce or wanting. But in God there is no darknesse, no discomfort, no disease, no death, no defect at all.

By these 7. particulars (which I have briefly pointed at, and which your owne meditations may profitably enlarge) I hope you be well satisfied and settled in the truth under hand, *That Ichovah is an incomparable Refuge unto his oppressed People.*

The Application of this Doctrin, now calls for your attention. In the making whereof I shall faithfully endeavour to be serviceable unto your soules by a four-

fold Use, of *Admonition.*
Reprehension.
Consolation.
Exhortation.

1. *Admonition.* It warneth all men to take heed of oppressing. Wise King Salomon suggesteth the naturalnesse of this inference. *Rob not the poore: because he is poore, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate. For the Lord will pleade their cause, and spoyle the soule of those that spoyled them.* Use 1.
Pro. 22. 28
23.

And the seasonableness of this Caveat will be confessed, if the duty of this day, and the quality of my Auditours be considered.

We are assembled to keepe a religious Fast. And, *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen* (saith the Lord) *to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdenes, to let the oppressed goe, and to say, that is free.* BG. 58. 6.

to loose the bands of wickednesse, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that yee breake every yoke.

The persons to whom I am preaching are men of high place, great power and much authority in the severall parts of this Kingdome, whose temptation it is to be oppressours.

In the enlarging of my dehoration from oppression, I humbly crave leave to give in, 1. Some aggravations of the sinne. 2. Some dissuasions from it. I shall briefly aggravate the sin of oppression under 5. heads.

Iob 24. 13 First, from the persons oppressing. 1. *When they are those who herein offend against the light.* Although they know divine prohibitions and menaces against this evill, yet they act it. You remember the words of the Apostle here applyable. *Rom. 1. 32. & 2. 1.* *Knowing the judgement of God (that they who doe such things are worthy of death) yet doe them. Therefore art thou inexcusable o man whosoever thou art.*

2. When such oppress their inferiours, who doe much complaine of oppression from others. There are Country Gentlemen, who cry out of heavy oppressions in Westminster-hall, and yet they themselves doe grinde the faces of their Tenants by racking rents and fines at home. Unto these I will only report the judgement of the Apostle Paul, *Rom. 2. 1.* *Therefore art not thou inexcusable o man, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy selfe, for thou that judgest, doest the same things.*

3. When men designed to doe Iustice by vertue of their callings, yet deale injuriously. The Psalmist aggravates the injustice of Iudges by this circumstance. *Ps. 83. 3, 5.* *How long will ye (ye who sit to judge others) judge*

unjustly. They know not neither will they understand, they walke in darknesse, all the foundations of the earth are out of course. And that passage of the Prophet *I-Isaiah*, is remarkable, *The Lord looked for Iudgement, but behold oppression, for Righteousnesse, but behold a cry.* Esa. 5. 7. מִשְׁפָּחַת The Hebrew word translated oppression, signifies a Scabb or a wound, and *Piscator* gives this note upon the place, *Iudices instar Scabiei molesti sunt oppressis.* When the oppressed people petitioned the Judges for reliefe, they caused their condition to become more painfull and grievous.

Secondly, from the persons oppressed. 1. If poore, the Item of *Salomon* is observable, *Enter not into the fields of the fatherlesse, for their Redeemer is strong, he will plead their cause with thee.* In *Nathans* Parable that oppression is judged very grievous, when he who had an herd and a flocke of his owne, yet tooke from the poore man his one, only, single *Ew-lambe*. It is an heavy oppression, when poore men are necessitated to sell their working tooles and to pawne their beds and wearing apparrell. Pr. 23 10, 11. 2 Sam. 12. 3. 4

2. If godly. *They eate up my people* (saith the Lord) *as men eate up bread.* Ps 14. 4 Uuro the palates of some, no morsels are so sweet as the bloud of the Saints. And God will give them bloud to drinke for they are worthy.

3. If the wrong reach many, *They oppresse a man and his house, even a man and his heritage,* saith the Prophet. Mic. 2. 2 Our Patenrees, Monopolists & other men of that make, may justly be cast under this loading aggravation.

Thirdly, From the quality of the things wherein people are oppressed. The Apostle saith expressly, *That no man should oppresse or goe beyond any other in any* 1 Thel. 6.

thing. Yet are there aggravations to greaten the sin of oppression, from the worth of the matters wherein the wrong is offered.

Deut. 27. 1. It is a cursed course to crush people in their outward estates. *Cursed is he that removeth his neighbours Land marke, and all the people shall say, Amen.*

2. But to overthrow mens civill liberties, and to bring them into slavery is a farre greater injury. *Men with great summes of money (or long service) obtaine freedome.*

3. How heavy then is that oppression which extendeth to the blood and lives of men. Their sinne is hainous, who hunt for the precious life of a man. *Skin for skin and all that a man hath will he give for his life.*

4. The worst oppression of all other, is that which pincheth upon the immortall soule. That accusation charged upon *Babylon*, for making merchandise of the soules of men is most intolerable. And how farre this fault is chargeable upon such who poyson or starve soules by imposing Popish Innovations, polluting Gods Ordinances, inhibiting Sermons, &c. I referre it to your judgement.

Fourthly, from the ends aimed at in oppression. *Men doe not despise a theefe (saith Salomon) if he steale to satisfie his soule.* But if a man shall oppresse others, to satisfie his owne lusts, this circumstance maketh an addition of very much guilt.

1. When through covetousnesse, a thirst after money, a man doth oppresse to increase riches.

2. When through brutish Sensuality, to please the palate, and to fill the guts, they oppress the poore saying, *bring and let us drinke.*

3. When men transported by the spirit of revenge, oppress others, purposedly to ease their stomackes, and to poure forth their gall upon them. As it was with *Haman*, in seeking

seeking to crush not only *Mordecai*, but all the Nation of the Jewes. Thus men make *provision for the flesh to satisfy it in the lusts thereof*, which is a practise shamefull and abominable. Ro. 13. 14.

Fifthly, from the manner of manning this sinne of oppression. If men oppresse only in lecter, as being ashamed to owne their injuriousnesse (*as the thief who steales in the night*) the fault is lesse hainous, then when they are corrupt and *speake wickedly concerning oppression, speake loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens*, undertaking to satisfie and maintaine acts of unrighteousnesse. When Lawyers at the Barr plead for oppression, Judges on the Bench justifie it, Ministers in the Pulpits preach for it, and Doctors in the Universities dispute and determine to defend it. Job 24. 14. Pl. 73. 8, 9.

And here I humbly referre it to your wisdomes to consider, whether our Prelates have not been (of late especially) the grand oppressors of the Kingdome, according to most, if not all, the aforementioned aggravations. Have not they been great oppressors both in Church and Common-wealth? What County, what City, what Towne, what Village, yea what Family, (I had almost said) what person in the Kingdome, hath not in one kinde or other, in some degree or other, at one time or other, beene oppressed by them? They and their officers, by citations, censures exactions have been Catholicke oppressors. How many wealthy men have been crushed by their cruelty? How many poore Families have been ruinated by their Tyranny? And I beseech you to consider, whether the most pious, both among Preachers and people, have not met with the hardest measures from their heavy hands. *Alas, alas!* How many faithfull Ministers have they silenced?

silenced ! How many gracious Christians have they excommunicated ! How many Congregations have they starved or dissolved in this Kingdome ! For the prooffe of all this, and of more then all this, I appeale unto the many Petitions presented to this honourable Parliament. And these are no small aggravations of these and other like their oppressions, that they call themselves the Fathers of the Church, and are accounted more knowing men then their brethren.

I have done with the aggravations of oppression. The dissuasions from oppression follow, some of which I shall briefly suggest under 2. Heads:

1. *A Commodo.*
2. *Ab Incommodo.*

First, the eschewing of oppression will be comfortable. 1. It may be some evidence of a regenerate estate. Gods people are called *His mercifull Ones* (For so the Hebrew word usually rendred Saints, in the booke of Psalmes doth properly signifie) because the tender mercies of the Almighty shed forth abundantly upon them, doe leave a compassionate frame upon their hearts. The Apostles Argument is pregnant to my purpose. *As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies.* And the example of the Gaoler expresseth thus much. How did the coming in of conquering grace change the man, from churlish and cruell, to kinde and compassionate. 2. It will administer boldnesse unto us, both before God and men. The Prophet Samuel is a good president to prove it. *Behold here I am, witnesse against me before the Lord, whom have I defrauded, whom have I oppressed, &c.* And they said, *thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us.*

Col. 3. 12.

1 Sam. 13.

3, 4

3. It may hopefully interest us in the speciall providence

providence of God for our protection and provision in the times of our need. For observe how divine promise speaks, *He that despiseth the gaine of oppressions, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* Esa. 33. 15
16.

Secondly, the fruits of oppression are many and bitter unto them who practise it; I will point at some of them. 1. It fastens a blacke marke of gracelesnesse upon them who use it. That passage of the Prophet is considerable. *He is Canaan* (so I render it from the Originall with the approbation of good Interpreters) *The ballances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress.* Hos. 12. 7.

You know by what expression Ezekiel suggesteth the condition of men unregenerate, *Thy birth and thy nativity is of the Land of Canaan*: And such (saith Hosea) is the estate of men, of Merchants practitioners in oppression. 2. It exposeth unto the many and heavy judgements of Almighty God. *This* (saith Iob) *is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.* Eze. 16. 3.
Iob 27. 13

In these words, first oppressors are branded for wicked ones, as was before touched. But passing that, let us enquire what this their portion is, which they must inherit from the punishing hand of God? I will in few words propound it, from the following verses: *God will cast upon him, and not spare, he would faine flee* (or in fleeing he would flee) *out of his hand.* ver. 22.

In his estate. *Though he heap up silver as the dust and prepare rayment as the clay He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.* ver. 16, 17.

In his posterity. *If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword, and his offspring shall not be saved.*

ver. 14, 18 *satisfied with bread. He buildeth his house as a Moth, and as a Booth, that the Keeper maketh. In his person, both inward terrors, and outward ruine. Terrors take hold on him, as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The East-winde carrieth him away and he departeth, and as a storme hurleth him out of his place. In his credit amongst men. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hisse him out of his place.* 3. These offenders cannot be concealed: For as their sinne ringeth in Gods eares, and calleth for vengeance. Behold (saith the Apostle Iames) *the hire of the Labourers, &c. cryeth, and the cries are entred into the eares of the Lord of Sabaoth.* So the Lord himselve undertaketh to give in evidence against them. *I will come neare to you in iudgement, and I will be a swift witnesse against those that oppresse.* And will it not be sad, when the Judge shall be a witnesse against the prisoner at the Barr. 4. At the last day, the sentence against the oppressors will be unspeakably heavy. You may guesse at it, by an Argument, *a minori ad maius*, if you reason from the lesse to the greater, from those words of our Saviour, Mat. 25. *Then shall he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill and his Angels, for I was hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c. And these shall goe away into everlasting punishment.* Marke my Argument (my Beloved) from this place. If not succouring, not supplying, not solacing, not supporting Gods impoverished, imprisoned, oppressed people will procure punishment perpetuall and unsupportable, what will the condition bee of them who have been their cruell oppressors? The Apostle Iames saith, *They shall have iudgement without mercy who shew no mercy.* The Lord set these considerations home upon

ver. 20, 21.

ver. 23.

Iam 5 4.

Mal 3. 5.

Mat. 25.
41---46.

Iam. 2. 13.

upon your hearts to affright from oppression.

For reprehension of 4. sorts of offenders against the Use 2. truth in hand.

If God promise to be the refuge of the oppressed, then those deserve blame, who imagine that seeking to the Lord in times of trouble is labour in vaine. *Job* bringeth in the wicked thus breathing their Atheisticall conceits. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* And doubtlesse many among us are of this opinion, as their neglect and sleighting of holy prayer doth undeniably discover. Job 31. 15.

But (my Beloved) our present imployment doth prove that we are better principled, and our grounds are solid and satisfying (*viz.*) 1. Gods promise. 2. Our owne experiences. *For the Lord hath not said to the seed of Jacob, seeke ye me in vaine.* And we have reaped such fruit of our prayers, that we may say with the Prophet *David. We sought the Lord and he heard us, and delivered us from all our feares.* Esa 45. 19.

2. Much more are they worthy sharp rebuke, whose profanenesse is so great, that they deride those who under pressures and in dayes of dangers, give themselves to prayer. The *Psalmist* mentions this, as the practice of Atheists. *You have shamed the Council of the poore, because the Lord is his Refuge.* In like manner, in these times, how many doe scoffe at the people of God, for their frequency and unweariednesse in Prayer and Fasting, expecting deliverance by such endeavours. Thus rayling *Rabshakeh* reproached *Hezekiah* and *Israel*, but the Lord accounted his language blasphemous, as holy Story doth witness. Psa 14. 6. & Esa 37.

Let not us be discouraged in improving God our Refuge by uncessant suites, because of mens scornes and derision : but rather imitate the *Psalmist*, who upon the report of the yeares of the wicked in this kinde, in the next verse breatheth forth prayer. *O that the Salvation of Israel were come out of Sion, when the Lord bringeth backe the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoyce and Israel shall be glad.* With the change of some few words, the same suit may be seasonable for us. *O that the deliverance of England and Ireland were come out of Syon, when the full Salvation of Ireland, and the perfect Reformation of England shall come from Heaven, then Ireland shall rejoyce and England shall be glad.*

3. My Doctrin checketh them, who in wayes of Creature-confidence betake themselves unto other Refuges, and not unto the Lord *Iehovah*. Mistake me not herein I pray you, for I dissuade not the use of meanes to prevent and remove trouble : but my meaning is, that God must be blessed for meanes, eyed in meanes, and at him the soule must looke above and beyond meanes, when most promising.

There are two Rocks upon which men are in danger to dash in dayes of trouble, either to tempt God by disusing meanes, or to provoke his Majesty by idolizing them : and this second sin I now reprove, as crosse-whetting upon my Text, and dangerous unto them who doe commit it. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arme, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.*

Woe unto them that goe downe to Egypt for helpe, and stay on Horses and trust in Chariots, because they are many, and in Horse-men because they are very strong.

We

We looke upon you our Parliament worthies, as the Horse-men and Chariots of *England*, we blisse you, and we blisse God for you, but we may not, we dare not depend upon you, lest at once we incenle the Almighty both against you and our selves.

4. The sharpest rebuke belongs unto them, who goe downe into hell for help in dangerous times, who rather make the Divell then God their Refuge: Such I meane who betake themselves unto sinfull shifts for the procuring of their safety, when they see a storme comming. Such who will take courses contradicting their consciences, their Covenants, their engagements both to God and man, to secure their comforts, to save their own heads. How farre are these men from beleeving the truth of my Text, which tels us, that, *the Lord will be a Refuge for the oppressed, a Refuge in times of trouble.* I shall with such persons seriously to consider the word of the Lord. *Because ye have said we have made a Covenant with death and with Hell are we at agreement, when the over-flowing scourge shall passe through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lyes our Refuge, and under falshood have we hid our selves. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Iudgement will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the haile shall sweepe away the refuge of Lyes, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.* Esa. 28. 15
17.

For *Consolation*, unto all them, unto whom God undertakes to be an helpe and shelter. *Happy is he that hath the God of Iacob for his helpe, whose hope is in the Lord his God.* Use 3.
Pl. 146. 5.

In the amplification of this Use, there are two things usefull to be enquired.

1. Who may hopefully expect helpe from Heaven.

F 3

2. What

2. What considerations concerning God their Refuge may make unto their comfort? For brevity sake I will not passe the bounds of the 145. *Psalm* in returning answer unto these two demands.

First, God will be their helpe, who enjoy him as their God. This is manifest from the 5.th. and 10.th. verses, *Whose hope is in the Lord his God. The Lord shall raigne for ever, even thy God.* Now to make the Lord our God, it is required that with highest estimations, most vigorous affections and utmost endeavours, we bestow our selves upon him. That in the Scripture phrase, men are said to make that their god, upon which the heart flowes forth with the highest tide of the fullest affections. Hence it is that *covetousnesse* is called *Idolatry*, and the *Epicures* are said to *make their bellies their gods*. Reflect therefore upon your selves most seriously and aske your hearts in the presence of the soule-searching Majesty, what you place the highest in your bosomes, for what you are resolved to make the greatest adventures: And if upon examination you finde that the Lord *Jehovah* hath the throne, the command in your breasts and lives, then doe not question your interest in his Highnesse, as your helpe and refuge.

Eph. 5. 5.
Phil. 3. 19.

Secondly, This *Psalm* holdeth forth foure truths concerning God, which may administer matter of much sweet support and joy unto them, whose helpe and hope he is.

ver. 6.

1. His Omnipotency expressed in the worke of Creation, *which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is.* There is much marrow in this one consideration to refresh a disconsolate spirit in these drooping times: I shall helpe you to it in five Correlaries

relaries or consequences, which naturally flow from this truth, (vid.) *That God in whom our helpe lyes made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, &c.*

1. Therefore God can easily succour and safeguard his people: As by the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the breath of his mouth. By his word he can command deliverances for Jacob. And by spreading forth his hands, as he that swimmeth, he bringeth downe the pride of Moab, And the fortresse of the high forts shall he bring downe, lay low and bring to the ground. Now the motion in swimming is easie, not strong; for strong violent stroakes in the water would rather sinké then support. And therefore by this expression the Holy Ghost would manifest with what facility he can subdue the stoutest adversaries of his Church.

Ps 33. 6.
Ps 14. 4.
Esa. 25. 12.
12.

2. Therefore the Lord can without prepared matter raise up his owne designs. As he made the world without any pre-existent principles, first he made the Chaos out of nothing: and then out of a confused heap, he framed the curious structure of the world, wherein all creatures in an admirable harmony seive each other.

This particular brought home to our concernements may be profitable. Although we looke upon our selves, as an unpolished people, to doe any great matter either in Church or Common-wealth. Although the Philosopher say, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and we complaine of self-nothingnesse, yet faith tels the soule, that *God made the things which are now scene out of things which doe not appeare.*

Heb. 11. 3.

3. Therefore the Lord can accomplish whatsoever he undertakes without assistants, for he had neither tools

Esa. 63. 5.

tooles nor co-workers, when he reared the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth. *When there is no helper, none to uphold, then the arme of the Lord brings Salvation.* What though there be few, very few who favour the worke of Reformation, in comparison of the Malignant Party, who oppose our hopes and welfare, yet may we pluck up our hearts with comfort from this consideration, *That our helpe standeth in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.*

Pl. 124. 8.

4. Therefore God can effect his designes, notwithstanding the vastest distance betwixt the termes from which, and unto which he workes ; for in the Creation he wrought from nothing to all things, from *the Earth which was without forme and void*, unto the perfecting of the world, in which worke nothing is defective, nothing redundant. We looke at a settled peace with perfect Reformation, as a great, great way off, espying millions of impediments, difficulties and oppositions in the way on this side it : yet this meditation may encourage.

Gen. 1. 31.
& 2. 1.

5. Therefore the Lord can dispatch his mighty Acts speedily, *For in six dayes he created the Heaven and the Earth, with all the host of them.*

Mic. 7. 20.

2. His Fidelity, *who keepeth truth for ever*, ver. 6. Our God in whom our helpe is, is a Covenant keeping God. Had the words runne thus, who dealeth with people according to their deserts for ever, then our hearts might have fainted in us, and our hopes have perished for ever. But seeing his Majesty hath bound himselfe to keepe truth, the truth of the Promises of his free grace, this consideration may hold up heart and hope together. When Satan and our owne consciences cast in sad discouragements

ments

ments, yet we may animate our selves by the words of the Church unto her God. *Thou wilt performe the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworne unto our Fathers from the dayes of old.*

3. The variety of Offices which the Lord undertakes in the behalfe of his people, according to their severall necessities. The particulars specified in the Psalme I shall only name, without interpretation or enlargement. *He executeth judgement for the oppressed, giveth food to the hungry, the Lord looseth the prisoners. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blinde, the Lord raiseth them that are bowed downe; the Lord loveth the righteous, the Lord preserveth the stranger, he relieveth the fatherlesse and widow, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.* The summe of all these expressions amounts to thus much. That the providences of the Almighty are alwayes sweetly and seasonably exercised for his people, and against their wicked oppressours. v. 7, 8, 9.

4. The perpetuity of his government. *The Lord shall reigne for ever, even thy God o Syon unto all generations,* ver. 10. Beloved we know that things went very ill with Israel, when there arose up a new King over Egypt which knew not Ioseph. And certainly, if the busineses of the world, should be transacted by any other supreme authority, then of our God the Lord Almighty, then might our condition be deplorable and miserable. But this is no small comfort unto us, that the God of Israel is the God of England, that his Kingdome still doth and ever shall rule over all Kings, Commanders, creatures and concernements whatsoever. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, Thy God o Syon reigneth unto all generations, praise gee the Lord.* EXO. I. 8. PL. 97. 1.

Use 4.

The last Use, the Use of Exhortation followes, which is to be divided into various branches. In the prosecution whereof I shall presse 5. duties which belong unto all without exception; and afterwards shall make bold to direct one exhortation by way of humble Petition unto the worthy members of the high and Honourable Court of Parliament.

Exhortation 1. To returne praise unto the Lord our Refuge, for that defence and those deliverances which hitherto we have had in him. Nationall and personall experiences should be perused, and for all the God of our salvation should be honoured. If we of this Kingdome cast backe our thoughts unto late providences, wee shall see cause to breake forth in the words of the Psalmist. *The Lord remembred us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

His Majesty commandeth and expecteth glory. I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorifie me. Yea he doth abundantly deserve it, for all that patience, wisdom, goodnesse, power and truth expressed upon us in our continued peace and safety. Therefore I pray you, *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* And how well may it become us every one in particular to resolve with David. *I will sing of thy power, yea I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning, for thou hast bin my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee O my strength will I sing, for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.*

This debt I believe will readily be acknowledged, but the question will be, how must it be payed? Praises are due debt, but how must they be tendered?

I. My

1. My answer is at hand, and it shall be but short.
 1. Gods speciall providence must be observed and proclaimed. *It shall come to passe in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and from thy faures, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve. That thou shouldst take up this Proverb, &c. How hath the oppressour ceased, the Lord hath broken the staffe of the wicked.* Noble Senatours, we honour you as our instrumentall Saviours in a great degree, and God forbid, but we should study to requite your labours and adventures for the Kingdomes welfare. Yet we must looke beyond you, and you beyond your selves in admiring the most high God, in what hath beene already wrought unto our admiration.

2. Our religious vowes must be performed. What our vowes were in the dayes of our feare and deepe danger our consciences will report, I onely presse the payment of this debt. *Offer to God thanksgiving and pay thy vowes unto the most High. Praise waiteth for thee in Syon, and unto thee shall the Vow bee performed.* Ps. 114.
Ps. 115.

3. Our obedience in all the branches of it should be bettered. Practicall praises are the most acceptable. Our lives must witnesse the gratitude of our hearts: In this case I cannot propound a better paterne for your imitation then *David*, who upon enquiry, what thank-offering should be tendered, breakes forth into this Resolution. *I will walke before the Lord in the Land of the living.* Wherein three things are observable and imitable.

1. His purpose to make a progresse, *I will walke.*

2. The sinceriry of his course, *Before the Lord (q. d.)*

I will take every step, undertake every duty, as under Gods pure and piercing eye. All acts of holiness and righteousness shall be discharged as before him.

3. The constancy of this care, *In the land of the living (q. d.)* so long as I live. Such a present of praise (Beloved) would please the Lord better than an Oxe or Bullock (as the Psalmist hath it) *that hath both horns and hooves.*

4. Gods publick worship should zealously be promoted. This was the first thing determined in Moses his Song, upon the unexpected continuance of Israels safety. *The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation, he is my rocke and I will prepare him an habitation.* It concerns us all upon the recording of our personall and National Deliverances, from oppressions either felt or feared, to lay forth our utmost strengths of authority, opportunity, interests and ability, both to purge and settle the holy worship of God, that his Majesty may enjoy a fixed habitation with content and glory amongst us.

Exhortation 2. To make sure our title unto God, as our peculiar refuge and protection, that we may not be reputed intruders, when we shall have occasion to throng into him for shelter in tempestuous weather. *Dauids suit may be seasonable for us all to joyne in. Be thou my strong habitation, whercunto I may continually resort.*

To quicken your care in this kind, many things might be mentioned. 1. Our dangers are great, whether we consider our owne deservings from God, or the designs and indeavours of Syons enemies against our peace and welfare.

2. The insufficiency of all Creature succours and
shelters,

shelters, how faire and how promising soever. *There is no King saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vaine thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* Pl. 33. 16, 17.

3. The Al sufficiency that there is in the Lord in every kinde to bestead every endangered soule, which enjoyeth him, as was fully discovered in the illustration of this Point now in prosecution.

More Arguments I shall not need to use to move your looking after the Lord, that he may be your Refuge when ruine is ready to rush in upon you. But to guide your course that you may possesse God, as your place of Defence; I will commend unto you 3. short Directions.

1. Labour by the knowledge and contemplation of Gods glorious, incomparable beauties, to let forth floods of the strongest love upon him. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him, I will set him on high, because he hath knowne my name.* Pl. 91. 14.

2. Endeavour from activity of pure love to his Majesty, more to awe your hearts, with the feare of his frowne, then of any, then of all combined oppositions which doe or can surround you. *Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people saith a confederacy, neither feare ye their feare, nor be afraid. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himselve, and let him be your feare, and let him be your dread: And he shall be for a Sanctuary.* Ez. 8. 12, 13, 14.

3. Seeke to be enriched with that righteousness which is truly Evangelicall. For Salomon assures us, *that the name of the Lord is a strong Tower, and that* Pro. 18. 10.

the righteous runneth into it and is safe (or set aloft.)
Now if you aske me, who are righteous according to the Gospels construction?

Luk. 1.6.

I returne answer, from the description given of *Zachary and Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord blamelesse.* From which testimoniall three notes of Gospell-righteousnesse may be suggested.

1. The rule regulating their course, is that which *God hath commanded and ordained.*

2. The latitude of their obedience, which in their ayme and endeavours is as large, as Law divine. They *mind Commandements and Ord.nances, yea all Commandements and Ordinances.*

3. The continuation of this course. They did not only now and then take a turne in the way of obedience, but they were persons *walking*, such who held on in obedientiall references unto God.

In these things, I beseech you, bestow your best houres and abilities, even as you doe desire, that the *Lord Iehovah may be your Refuge in the times of trouble, in the seasons of distresse.*

Exhortation 3. To improve our propriety in God (having made him our Refuge) for safety in stormy and perilous times. I should not need to perswade this practice, if self-love was rightly ordered in us, seeing our selves, both greatly need the Almighty, and might reape abundant fruit by making improvement of him. The unreasonable creatures, by a naturall instinct, betake themselves unto places of defence, when dangers doe threaten them.

Pl. 104. 18

The high hills are a refuge for the wilde Goates, and the Rockes for the Conyes.

We

We know by observation, that the little Bees will hast to their Hives, and the Pigeons will flock to their holes, when the storme is rising. I will forbear to enlarge this Exhortation, either by Gods Precepts and Promises, or by the practises and experiences of his people, taking this course in all ages.

This unto me is a commanding Argument, that we shall in a great degree take Gods name and excellencies in vaine, if we labour not to live upon them by a fruitfull improvement, and so consequently, we shall at once, both displease and dishonour God, and damage and endanger our selves.

If you demand, how you should make your use of God, as your incomparable Refuge? I shall direct you unto *David* for an Answer, 1. *Trust in him at all times,* *Ps. 62. 8.* *ye people,* 2. *Poure out your heart before him, God is a Refuge for us.* *Selah.*

First, by true trust in God, we betake our selves unto him as a Castle of Defence. The words immediately following my Text declare thus much. *And Ps. 9. 10.* *they that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou Lord hast not forsaken them who seeke thee.* Such who apprehend sure safety to be had in God, they will seeke him, by placing their assiance in him. The practice of *David* makes this more apparant: for he by way of appropriation, speaking thus of God, *My Ps. 144. 2.* *Fortresse, my high Tower and my Deliverer, my Shield* (he addeth) *and in whom I trust.* As by diffidence the soule keeps at a distance from God, so by confidence we draw nigh unto him.

Now to encourage your fiduciall approaches unto God, I will only mention 3. things, which your selves must enlarge and apply unto your own hearts seriously.

1. Con-

Esa 26.4. 1. Consider the irresistable and immutable strength of the Lord. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

Heb. 6. 17 18. 2. Acquaint your selves with precious Promises, whereby his Majesty desires to draw the disconsolate soule unto him. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heyres of Promise the immutability of his Counsell, confirmed it by oath, that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us. In the Lord (saith David) I will praise his word, in the Lord I will praise his word, in the Lord I have put my trust.*

2 Sam. 22. 1, 2. 3. Review and husband your experiences of Gods protecting providence in times past. *In the day when God had delivered David from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, thus he speaks, The Lord is my Rocke and my Fortresse, and my Deliverer. The God of my Rocke, in him I will trust, &c.*

Pl. 142. 5, 6. Secondly, by holy Prayer we hast unto God for helpe in times of trouble. *I cryed unto the Lord (saith David) I said thou art my Refuge, Attend unto my cry, Deliver me from my Persecutours.* Here for the guidance of your prayers, you may take notice of these brieft Directions.

Esa. 37. 5. 1. Your cries must be cordiall, and not only vocation. *Poure out your hearts before him. And lift up a Prayer (saith Hezekiah) It will not be sufficient to say a Prayer (as the world is wont to expresse it) or to word it before the Lord, but we should rather heart it before God in holy prayer, that we may receive help from him in times of need.*

2. Your hearts must behave themselves humbly before

fore the throne of grace, when you petition deliverance from the devouring oppressours. *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine eares to heare. To judge the fatherlesse and the oppressed, that the man of the Earth may no more oppresse.* Pl. 10. 17. 18.

3. The soule should have sincere references, to the glory of God, in seeking selfe-safety. Thus David desiring deliverance from many mighty Persecutors, he adds. *Bring my soule out of prison, that I may praise thy Name.* Pl. 142. 6. 7.

4. Plead the wickednesse of them who doe oppresse and would devoure, *They gather themselves together against the soule of the righteous, and condemne the innocent bloud, but the Lord is my Defence and my God is the Rocke of my Refuge, and he shall bring upon them their owne iniquity, and shall cut them off in their owne wickednesse, yea the Lord our God shall cut them off.* Pl. 94. 21. 22, 23.

5. Wait upon God unweariedly and resolve to continue praying, whatsoever delayes, checks, or oppositions may encounter you. *In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, untill these calamities be overpast.* Pl. 57. 1.

Because of his strength I will wait upon thee, for God is my Defence. And certainly if we rightly consider Pl. 59. 9.
1. Our distance from God in worth and degree. 2. Our dependance upon him, together with our undone condition if he desert us, we shall carry the Lords leisure, attending upon his Majesty, for the answer of our supplications, when besieged with dangers on every side.

Exhortation 4. To cast off all cowardly feares of
H our

Pl. 61. 1, 2
3.

our oppressours, how potent, politick and prevailing
soever they be. The people of God have frequently
gathered courage from this consideration. Truly my
soule waiteth upon God, from him commeth my saluati-
on, He only is my Rooke and my Salvation, he is my
defence I shall not be greatly moved. How long will yee
imagine mischief against a man, ye shall be slaine all of
you, as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering
fence.

Pl. 46. 1.
2, 3, 7, 11.

God is our Refuge and strength, a very present helpe
in trouble. Therefore will not we feare though the Earth
be removed, and though the Mountaines be carried in-
to the midst of the Sea, though the waters thereof roare
and be troubled, though the Mountaines shake with the
swelling therof, &c. The Lord of Hosts is with us, the
God of Jacob is our Refuge. Selah.

Ps. 57. 1, 2.
13.

Through want of time, I dare not adventure upon
the amplification of this Use. Therefore I crave leave
for your helpe and heartening against the feare of Op-
pressors, to improve onely one Scripture, which I
conceive very pertinent and profitable. I, even I am
he that comforteth you, who art thou that thou shouldest
be affraid of a man that shall dye, and of the son of man
which shall be made as grasse, and forgettest the Lord
thy maker, that hath stretched forth the Heavens, and
laid the foundations of the Earth, and hast feared conti-
nually every day, because of the fury of the Oppressour,
as if he were ready to destroy, and where is the fury of the
Oppressor, &c.

In these words, the Lord by his Prophet checking
and chiding his timorous people, doth counsell them
to seeke the conquest of their dismaying feares, by
comparing himselfe their God, with their furious op-
pressours.

1. Though

1. Though they be our oppressours, yet his Majesty is our comforter. And is not the God of all consolations more able to cheare us, then all men are to dishearten us?

2. They in their best strength are but dying men and withering grasse; but he is the Almighty, the all-making God, whose omnipotency and independency is sufficiently discovered by stretching forth the Heavens, and by laying firm the foundations of the Earth. And our necessities cannot possibly put him upon a more difficult service for our Deliverance.

3. Although they seeme ready to destroy, as an Army at hand to devoure: yet remember that your Saviour is the *Lord of Hosts*, who commands and orders all Martiall forces in the world, who can sound a retreat and call them off by one word in a moment. When we speake of Armies on Land, and strength on the Seas prepared against us; What though Papiests, Atheists and Divels were in combination to destroy us, yet the *Generalissimo* who manageth all forces and maketh all motions, is the *Lord of Hosts* our maker, our comforter.

ver. 15.

4. If our trembling, misgiving hearts shall object the ruines wrought in *Ireland*, as occasions to increase dejecting fears: we should repell them, by reminding experiences of Gods former famous acts for his servants safety, when in much deeper danger, *I am the* Lord thy God who divided the Sea, whose waves roared. That was *Israels* experience which is on record in holy Writ for our encouragement. We may add from Gods dispensations in this Kingdome. Who in the yeare *Eighty-Eight* sunke and scattered the Spanish Navy called *invincible*? Who broke the necke of the

ver. 15.

Popish powder-plot, and brought to light those under ground workings of the traitorous, bloudy Papists. And who lately composed the dangerous differences betwixt *England* and *Scotland*, which threatened the desolation of both Kingdoms? Remember this God is your Refuge, and therefore be of good courage and feare not the fury of the oppressours, though in appearance ready to destroy.

Exhortation. To move us all to make use of our interest in God, in the behalfe of our oppressed Brethren. You know that we are bound to love our Neighbours as our selves, and to pray for them as for our selves: therefore my Inference is not forced, but naturall.

I shall be very short (as Straights of time command) in this Exhortation, wherein I have bleeding, oppressed *Ireland* principally in my thoughts, and the rather because the sad troubles of our Country-men and Brethren there, is one chiefe occasion of our Congregating thus solemnely to seeke our God this Day.

Good *Nehemiah* may be propounded as an excellent patterne both to quicken and to direct this duty. He having intelligence, that the Jewes were in great affliction and reproach, and that the wall of *Jerusalem* also was broken downe, and the gates thereof burnt with fire. *It came to passe* (saith he) *when I heard these words, that I sat downe and wept and mourned certain Dayes, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven.* This holy man was warme in worldly respects, being well placed and respected in the Court of a great King, he was in the Palace of a Prince in prosperity, at a great distance from danger, though *Jerusalem* was distressed, yet you see his strong affect ons, you reade his

his religious practice, in both which we are bound to make imitation. *Remember them that are in bonds* Heb. 13. 3. *(saith the Apostle) as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the body.* In which words our duty is both strongly urged and well guided. You must remember them *as being your selves in the body* (q d) because you are fellow-members with them in the same mysticall body (as some interpret) or (as others judge) seeing your selves are yet in the body, natures frame not being yet dissolved, you your selves are exposed to the like sufferings, and therefore should Christianly remember them. But will a sleighy, wordy minding of them be sufficient? No, (saith our Apostle) you must feelingly minde them, as though your selves personally shared in their sufferings, or as your selves would desire to be remembred if in their sad condition.

This imployment is excellently perswaded by king David in the 122. Psalm. 1. Because hereby we shall at once, both evidence our spirituall love and interest ourselves in Gods Promise to undertake our personall welfare. *Pray for the peace of Ierusalem; they shall prosper that love thee.* Pl. 122. 6. 2. By his owne practice. For this was his request in reference to Ierusalem. *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy Palaces.* ver. 7. 3. Because of our neare relation unto them, whose condition calleth for our prayers. *For my Brethren and companions sakes, I will now say peace be within thee.* ver. 8. 4. Seeing the Religion and worship of God is there professed and practised. *Because of the house of the Lord my God I will seeke thy good.* ver. 9. How tully all these Arguments reach us in reference unto distra-

And, distressed *Ireland*, I humbly referre it to your considerations.

But you will say unto me, wherefore doe you thus perswade us? Doe you not see we are here with you to pray for *Ireland*. And is there not a monthly Fast appointed, that prayers may be continued? All this I thankfully acknowledge, both blessing God for this mercy, and honouring the Kings Majesty, with the Honourable Court of Parliament, for their religious care herein: Yet it is my duty to lay the weight of Scripture authority upon your consciences, that you may conscientiously and affectionately bestow your selves in secret daily, as in publick weekly, monthly in prayers for your oppressed Brethren.

But is this all that you have to say? I answer. No. There are two duties to be added unto our prayers, without the addition whereof, our prayers for *Ireland*, will be lesse successfull for it, and lesse comfortable to our selves. 1. We must repentingly returne unto the Lord from the evill of our wayes. Both *Nehemiah* and *Daniell* tooke this course, when they sought the Lord for *Israel*. The Lord directed *Iobs* friends, to crave his prayers, promising to accept him in their behalfe. And the Prophet *Isaiah* calls for heart humiliation and conversion, before he directs this supplication. Spare thy people o Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God. The Reason whereby *Hezekiah* moves his people to repent is remarkeable. For if ye turne againe unto the Lord, your brethren shall find compassion.

2. We must contribute our best assistance in all kinds, according as God gives power and opportunity, for their

Ioh. 42.8.

Isaiah 42.13, 17.

2 Chr. 30.9.

their reliefe and deliverance. Thus did *Nehemiah* in trading every Talent with which divine providence had trusted him, for *Ierusalem* welfare: He improves his favour with the King, and imployes authority received by commission from him for the common good; he worketh, watcheth, warreth, commandeth, encourageth, threatneth, punisheth, &c. that he might be serviceable. In like manner should we for *Ireland*, consult, command, contribute, underwrite, encourage others or adventure our selves, according to our severall stations and abilities, as the Lord shall be pleased to goe before us by his leading providence. And truly, there is no more sincerity of heart in our suits, then there are suitable endeavours in our lives, to effect and accomplish what we pray for.

From these generall exhortations which concerne all, I now proceed unto that, which more peculiarly appertaineth unto you Right Honorable, whose servant I am, in my present employment. Give your servant leave I pray you, to perswade, to petition your imitation of God, in becomming a *Refuge to his oppressed people in the times of trouble*. The Lord is a Refuge both offensive and defensive, offensive unto the oppressors, defensive unto the oppressed. And it will be your honour, in both to be imitators of him.

From God our Tower and Fortresse, our Castle of defence, there are battering Canons discharged, thunder and lightning scattered, terrible judgements (I meane) denounced against oppressors. The Lord undertaking the prosperity and establishment of his people, addeth, *And I will punish all that* 1cr. 30. 209

that oppresse them. And of Christ this was prophetically foretold. *He shall breake in peeces the oppressors.* Right Honourable, I presse not rigor, but righteousness. Neither doe I take upon my selfe, the boldnesse in personall cases to counsell you. God hath made you wise, and my prayer is, that your zeale and courage may be answerable. But my zeale for Gods glory and your honour, makes me bold to tell you, that there are many, who reproachfully say, *You shew your teeth, but you doe not bite.* For my part, I shall only reade to you, two quotations out of sacred Scripture, the one suggests the comfort of doing judgement, the other intimates the danger of neglecting it. *I have done justice and judgement, leave me not to mine oppressors. Be surety for thy servant for good, let not the proud oppresse me. Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let goe out of thy hand, a man whom I appointed to utter destruction: therefore thy life shall goe for his life.*

But my principall arrand is to request you, to labour to be like your God, in becoming a covert unto us from the face of the spoilers. From my Text I presse Gods owne practice. *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgement for all that are oppressed. He strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong.* And this was prophecied concerning Christs care of his people. *No oppressor shall passe through them any more.* Yea this is reported in the commendation of the Lord Jesus, that while as man he abode on Earth, *He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed.*

These 4. Considerations following may serve further and more forceably to set on my present suite.

1. The

1. The fruits of oppression upon particular persons oppressed are very grievous. Surely (saith Salomon) *Eccl. 7. 7.* *oppression maketh a wise man mad.* Into what extremities and confusions are many at this day apt to runne out, because bitten, or rather torne with the teeth of Prelaticall oppressours. And I am confident that the likeliest way to heale our breaches, and to compose our differences, is the removal of our oppressions. And Salomon thus againe expresseth himselfe. *I considered Eccl. 4. 1. 3.* *all the oppressions that are done under the Sunne, and behold the teares of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter, and on the side of their oppressours there was power, but there was no Comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.* Many in this Kingdome have dyed many deaths under the yron hands of heavy oppressours, and truely many thousands of us shall dye many thousand times more, except you relieve us.

2. The danger of the Kingdome is no lesse then desolation, except you our State Physitians apply timely plaisters to heale our breaches, by easing us of our oppressions. For thus bath the Lord of Hosts said. *Isa. 6. 6.* *Hew yee downe Trees, and cast a Mount against Jerusalem, this is the City to be visited, she is wholly oppression in the midst of her. The people of the Land have used Ezck. 22. 29, 30, 31.* *oppression, have exercised robbery, and have vexed the poore and needy, yea they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, &c. but I found none. Therefore have I powred out mine indignation upon them, I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath.*

3. Those draw downe the wrath of God upon their

Ier. 21. 12.

owne heads, who having power in their hands, continue carelesse in endeavouring the reliefe of the oppressed. *O house of David, thus saith the Lord. Deliver him that is spoyled out of the hand of the Oppressour, lest my fury goe out like fire, and burne that none can quench it.*

Ier. 22. 3, 4

4. By labours of this kinde, you shall promote the honour and prosperity both of our King and this Kingdome. *Deliver the spoyled out of the hand of the oppressour, &c. For if ye doe this thing, indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house, Kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in Chariots and on horses, he and his Servants.*

The equity of this Exhortation I am confident will be confessed : but enquiry may be made, What I meane by the oppressions, from which the Parliament should deliver us.

I answer, we groane and lye grovelling under many oppressing Grievances, both in the Church and Common-wealth, yet considering my calling, it will not so well become me, to particularize our civill presures, neither need I bestow any words that way, seeing your selves have given us abundant cause to acknowledge that you have taken exact notice of them. But seeing loades which are laid upon mens consciences are most proper for me to complaine of, suffer me, I pray you, feelingly and faithfully to spread some of them before you.

1. Subscription urged upon all Graduates in both Universities, and upon all men entering into the Ministry is an heavy oppression. (Mistake me not, for I meane not Subscription according to the Statute of the 13. of Queene Elizabeth, which is to those Articles

ticles which onely concerne the Confession of the true Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments; but I intend the Subscription commonly called and knowne by the name of the *Bishops Subscription.*) By reason hereof, many young men of promising parts and well ripened hopes, are driven from the study of Divinity, from the worke of the Ministry, because not able to get over this block. And most in the Universities, at least those who take the degree of Batchelours of Arts, are necessitated to subscribe, themselves know not to what, and so through ignorance miserably ensnare their owne consciences, as many sad experiences witnesse.

2. The pressing of the old Ceremonies in divine Administrations upon pain of Suspension, Silencing, Deprivation and Excommunication. How many deare unto God are hereby deprived of some sacred Ordinances? How many able Ministers of the Gospel have hereupon lost both liberty and livings, and their Families exposed to woefull penury? How many Congregations have beene deprived of their painfull Pastours? How many of our deare Country-men both Preachers and others, have within few yeares last past, been compelled to leave this Kingdome the place of their nativity. And certainly the continuing of this Grievance is the more inexcusable, because the most moderate men who plead for these Ceremonies, hold them things indifferent, and say they are, *tolerabiles inopria.*

3. Conniving at an ignorant, idle, erroneous, scandalous Ministry. Under this head I complaine of foure sorts of Clergy-men (commonly so called) being heavy burthens to the Church of Christ.

1. Blind Seers, who know not Heaven-way, dumb dogs which cannot barke.

2. Idle droanes, who either preach not at all, or very seldome, or fruitlesly without care and study.

3. Mis-guiding Guides. Men Schismaticall and Hereticall, who set poyson instead of wholesome food before their people.

4. Men scandalous, who plucke downe more with their foule hands, then they build up with their faire tongues. Under this head I may place Non-residency, which breeds and feeds a Ministry, ignorant, idle, erroneous and licentious.

4. The fearefull abuse of that high Ordinance of God, a *sacred Oath*, amongst all rankes and conditions of people in the Kingdome. In the Universities, the Oath of *Matriculation* to observe the Statutes of the University, which not one of many hundreds ever know. The Oathes of severall Officers both in Church and Common-wealth, which although I cannot specifye, yet it is my hearty request that they may be perused, to prevent the profanation of Gods name, and the ensnaring of many thousand soules.

5. In regard of Church-censures. The dreadfull sentence of Excommunication is often passed and executed upon persons for small offences, yea for acts not evill, and (which is most horrible) for doing that which both God and the necessities of their own souls require. It is a burthen intollerable, that men should be cast out of the Congregation of Gods people, banished from his publick worship, and delivered up to Satan for non-appearance at the Cathedrall Court, for buying, selling, or working on an idle holy-day, yea for

for going out of their owne Parishes to heare a Sermon or repeating Sermons and praying with some Neighbours in their owne Families.

And on the other hand, it is no small Grievance, both to godly Ministers and their people, that those who are the true Officers of Christ in his Church, have not authority to keepe them who are palpably ignorant and notoriously, scandalously profane, from the Sacrament of the Lords Supper.

6. The opposition made against the power of Religion, is a grievous oppression. When such who are forwarder in holy courses then others, are derided and discouraged by reproachfull names, yea molested and persecuted for frequenting the Ordinances of grace, whither publike or private, for the building up of their soules in Christ.

And I humbly commend this to your consideration, whither the Prelaticall Government hath not bin the root of all, or (at least) of almost all these oppressions. For my part, I professe that I cannot expect a compleat deliverance from these, and other like oppressions, but by the extirpation of that frame.

Right Honourable, you have done much, yea very much for our ease already, we are sensible that many heavy burthens are taken off our backs, which crushed us grievously heretofore: and for that reliefe which we have receeived we blesse God, we honour our King and you. And I now heartily intreat and encourage the perfecting of that which you have so worthily begun. When *Syon* is set up in beauty, adorned and strengthened with her watch-Towers and Officers, then *God will be knowne in her Palaces for a Refuge.*

Pl. 48.3.

Great joyes have bin raised in our hearts by under-

standing from you, your intentions to call an Assembly of Divines, to consult with God concerning Church occasions, and we will daily pray for the directing and perfecting thereof, unto Gods honour and this Kingdomes welfare through Jesus Christ. But I beseech you give me leave in the name of many to request your great care in the choice of men most meet for that great worke. And for this end, I humbly commend 3. qualifications to be minded in the men to be elected. Let them be,

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bly.

1. Men of approved piety, whose hearts are awed with Gods feare, and unmoveably bent to advance his glory.

2. Scripture men, Men well acquainted with the records of Heaven, by the authority wherof, all doubts and differences should be determined.

3. Men not biassed with selfish partiality, Such who may come to the Consultation as white paper, capable of those impressions, which the evidence and power of truth shall imprint.

Sound Doctrine maintained, pure Worship exercised, right Discipline erected and established will conduce greatly to *Englands* peace and prosperity. *When the Lord shall have washed away the filthinesse of the daughters of Syon, &c. The Lord shall create upon every dwelling place of Mount Syon, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoake by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a Defence.*

Isa. 4. 4, 5.

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Die Mercurij 29. Junij, 1642.

IT is this day Ordered by the Commons now assembled in Parliament, That *M. Ash* and *M. Hampden* shall returne thanks to *M. Ash* for the good paines he took in the Sermon he preach'd the last Fast day but two at the intreaty of the said Commons, and that he be desired to print his Sermon, And that no man presume to print it, but such as hee shall appoint, till the House shall take further Order.

H. Elsyng. Cler. Parl. D. Com.

I appoint *Edward Brewster* and *Iohn Burroughs*
to print my Sermon. *Simson Ash.*

